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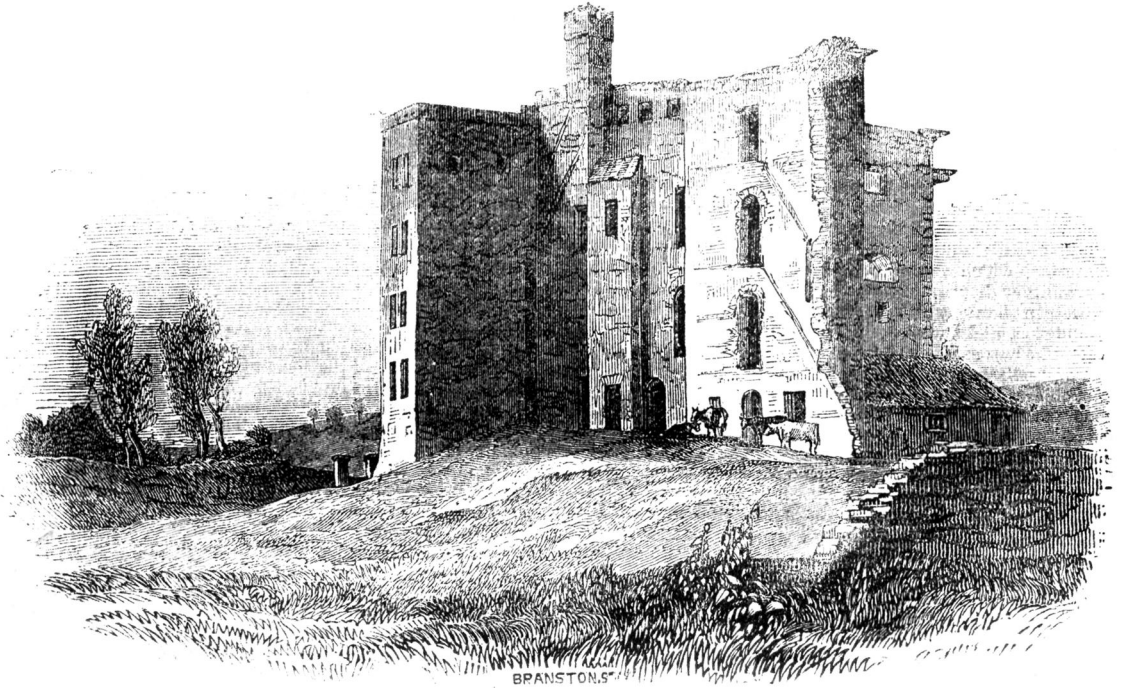
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THE IRISH PENNY JOURNAL.

NUMBER 46.

SATURDAY, MAY 15, 1841.

VOLUME I.



DANGAN CASTLE, COUNTY OF MEATH.

THE ruins of Dangan Castle, situated about two miles of the village of Summerhill, in the county of Meath, stand in the centre of an extensive demesne, once richly wooded, and within which, formerly spread the placid waters of a small but handsome lake, since drained. The grounds have been almost entirely deprived of their ancient timber, but still retain some traces of their former beauty. The remains of this once noble mansion, of which our engraving represents the rere, consist of a massive keep, which, with outworks long since destroyed, formed the ancient fortress: attached to this is the mansion built in the Italian style, the front of which is surmounted by a heavy and richly-moulded cornice. Of this part of the building (apparently erected about the beginning of the last century) nothing but the outer walls remain, and the interior space, once formed into ample halls and chambers, has been converted into a flower garden.

It would perhaps be impossible now to determine with any degree of certainty the age to which the original erection of this castle should be referred, its ancient architectural peculiarities having been completely destroyed in the endeavour to make it harmonize with the buildings of more recent erection, which have been appended to it, and the property having changed masters so often; but it is doubtless of no small antiquity.

Dangan was anciently part of the possessions of the Fitz-Eustace family, who were long distinguished for loyalty and valour, as a reward for which the title of Baron of Portlester was bestowed upon Rowland Fitz-Eustace in the year 1462, by King Edward IV. In the fifteenth century it came into the possession of the Earl of Kildare, by marriage with Anne, the daughter and heiress of Sir Nicholas Fitz-Eustace of Castle-martin; but in the same century a daughter of this earl married Christopher Plunket, son of the Baron of Killeen, and

in her right he succeeded to this and several other estates.*

Dangan afterwards (but at what time we are uncertain) became the property of the De Wellesleys or Westleys, alias Posleys, a family of the greatest antiquity and of Saxon origin, who had settled in the county of Sussex in England, one of whom was standard-bearer to King Henry II., in which capacity he accompanied that monarch into Ireland, and was rewarded for his services with large grants of lands in the counties of Meath and Kildare. From this illustrious ancestor sprang a numerous and respectable family, who received several distinguished marks of royal favour; and we find that in the year 1303 "Wulfrane de Wellesley and Sir Robert Percival were slain the second day before the calends of November" fighting against the Irish; and that John de Wellesley, who received from King Edward II. a grant of the custody of the Castle of Arden, was the first of the family created a Baron of Parliament, these honours being conferred on him as a reward for having in the year 1327 overthrown the Irish of Wicklow in a battle in which their leader David O'Toole was taken prisoner.

But it is the modern, not the ancient history of Dangan Castle, which gives to it a more than ordinary degree of interest. Within those now silent chambers and tottering walls, on the 1st of May 1769, the great Duke of Wellington, the illustrious hero of Waterloo, commenced that auspicious life which was afterwards so replete with honour and renown. The grandfather of this truly great man, Richard Colley, succeeded to the possession of this castle and estate by bequest from his cousin Garrett Wesley or Wellesley, in the year 1728. He was descended from the Colleys of the county of Rutland, of whom

* The preceding statement of our correspondent appears to be somewhat erroneous; Dangan was the seat of the Wellesley family at an earlier period.—Ed.

the first who came to Ireland was Walter Colley, who migrated hither in the reign of King Henry VIII, and he settling at Kilkenny, was in the year 1537 appointed Solicitor-General, which office he resigned in 1546, but was soon after created Surveyor-General of Ireland. Richard Colley with the estate also took the name of Wesley or Wellesley, and was created Baron of Mornington in the year 1746. His son and successor Garret Colley Wellesley was on the 20th of October 1760 created Viscount Wellesley of Dangan, and Earl of Mornington. This nobleman died on the 22d of May 1781, leaving seven sons, the eldest of whom, Richard, second Earl of Mornington, was created Marquis Wellesley on the 2d day of December 1799; and the fifth was no less a person than the present Arthur Duke of Wellington, who was born (an extraordinary coincidence) in the same year which gave birth to Napoleon Bonaparte. In the year 1788 he received his first commission as ensign in the 73d regiment, and after going through the regular gradation he was presented with the lieutenant-colonelcy of the 33d regiment in 1793. Step by step he advanced, till, raised to the high pinnacle of rank on which he now stands. He commanded the British army in twenty-eight victoriously fought fields, the final one of which was the glorious battle of Waterloo, which victory added the last and most illustrious military laurel to the wreath which crowns his noble brow. In the year 1811 he was made Earl and Marquis of Wellington, and Duke of Ciudad Rodrigo and Vittoria, and in 1814 he was created Duke of Wellington and Marquis of Douro, and received from Parliament a grant of £300,000. All subjects bordering on religion or politics being forbidden in our publication, we must say nothing of the subsequent life of the Duke of Wellington; and shall only add, that there exists not an unprejudiced man in Ireland of any sect or party who does not feel a pride in the honour of being a fellow-countryman of the hero of Waterloo.

While the most eminent descendant of its ancient noble owners was thus progressing to distinction and renown, Dangan Castle was as fast hastening to decay and desolation; it was sold by the Marquis Wellesley to Colonel Burrows, by whom it was underlet to Mr Roger O'Connor, during whose tenancy it was completely destroyed by a conflagration, not supposed to be accidental; and if report be true, it was converted (at no distant period) into a place of concealment for plunder, and a resort of thieves. J. G. S. P.

A LEGEND OF CLARE,

BY J. GERAGHTY M'TEAGUE.

THE author of a "Tour in Connaught" has some curious and interesting remarks and notes concerning the almost universal belief of the inhabitants of the West, that not only in former ages was this our native island much more extensive than at present, but that the land of ERIN itself is but a mere corner, a little *slice* as it were of that which was once an immense continent. He adduces in support of this, and gravely and seriously too, by the bye, many most ingenious proofs; nor does he at all discard or hesitate to bring forward the more "circumstantial evidence" of tradition to his aid. He relates too the popular story about O'Brassil, or the Enchanted Island, and another of the island of the "Bo-Fin," (or "Fiune,") the *fair cow*, which had lain beneath the waves spell-bound.

There are points in which all these traditions concerning the islands undoubtedly agree; but there is one among them remarkable on many accounts, which has excited my own curiosity more than once; and as it certainly confirms rather than invalidates the opinions of "C. O." on the subject, I will relate it, perhaps with less hesitation.

But, oh ye geologists! who by a single word (if ye should so will it) can overset all our theories—who have but to say "it is impossible," when all our speculations, nay, even our firmly rooted belief, would be scattered, like the Atlantic wave, against the cliffs of Moher—oh, spare us! Let not the delicious, the hallowed lands of "legendary lore" be invaded by one of you heartless monsters! Let us but picture to ourselves the sturdy figure of this investigator of pyrogenous and heterogeneous stratifications, hammer in hand, attending to the account of some magic island or delightful land which once stretched out far and wide before him; he listens with apparent earnestness. But beware!—suddenly he is seen to stoop; he cracks off with his execrable instrument a little "specimen" of some overhanging romantic-looking cliff; anon he shakes his head portentously, and out comes an awful

volley from his well-stored vocabulary of Greek derivatives, and Latin or German jaw-smashers. Out upon him, the horrid creature!

Our tale, nevertheless, may be as *geologically true* as the strictest of the Bucklands or Sedgwicks could desire; we hope so too; but may he, if one *should* do us the honour to read our story, at least dissemble for the nonce, and *pretend* to be as ignorant and as happy as ourselves!

The land of Kylestafeen extended in former ages more than a hundred miles to the westward of the present boundary of Ireland. There was also contiguous to it, to the northward, the far-famed island of O'Brassil, besides others of inferior note. But Kylestafeen surpassed them all, not only in superior extent, but in the fertility of its soil, and in the number and capacity of its magnificent harbours; near which, under the wise and gentle sway of its beneficent monarch, flourished splendid cities. Its lovely valleys were watered by the clearest rivers, and in the grandeur of its mountains, and the beauty of its plains, by no other country under heaven could it be rivalled.

We have mentioned the character of that king who at the period of our tale ruled in Kylestafeen. At this time King Loydann was extremely old, and wished to relieve his mind, for the remainder of his life, from the cares of royalty. So, on a certain day, he made a formal abdication of his throne and power to his two sons, pursuant to an old-established law in that country, which ordained, that in case the king should leave behind but two sons, they were to reign conjointly.

But ere the king finally gave up the important charge to his sons, he called them to him, and bound them by the most solemn vows to conform to the following promise:—That if at any moment one of them should by any act of his own incur the displeasure of his brother, he should at once be chained, and his sides pierced by two daggers. "This dreadful oath I now exact from you, my sons," said Loydann, "in order that you never may be liable to the slightest disagreement, for the remembrance of it will for ever hold you both united; and if, in whatsoever you do, you consult each other, the most remote possibility of such a contingency will be avoided."

Though the strict propriety of this act may be considered questionable, Loydann did it from the best motives; and this too will be apparent, if we consider the respective characters of the two brothers Fahune and Niall; the elder, Fahune, being of a remarkably fiery, and, as his father feared, unforgiving disposition, whilst the younger was famed for gentleness; both were brave and impetuous, yet of dissimilar tempers and habits.

Now, at the time this act of abdication was performed, a series of rejoicings took place at the court of Kylestafeen, which were conducted with great magnificence. The days were spent in the manly recreations of the chase, while the dance and the strains of music enlivened their evenings' entertainments.

Amidst a number of lovely forms which graced the court of Kylestafeen, the daughter of the Prince of O'Brassil was peculiarly conspicuous. The inhabitants of both countries had ever been on the most amicable terms, and by the request of Teartha, the young and graceful sister of the princes, Corgeana had been invited to pass the pleasant hours of summer at Kylestafeen, and to be present at the festivities.

Corgeana was dangerously beautiful. Both brothers had frequent opportunities of converse with her; both admired her, struck with the elegance of her manners, and her many accomplishments; each, in short, wished her for his own! Yet it was only towards Niall, that, on her part, a corresponding affection existed: the imperious spirit of Fahune was uncongenial to her. But unfortunately Fahune thought even now that she was his, and that he had but to signify his intention, and her compliance would succeed, while at the same time she had already listened to and favourably received the solicitations of his brother!

But now the dreary winter approached, and the time came when Corgeana should depart from the hospitable shores of Kylestafeen. Their galleys were prepared, and all being ready, they took their farewell of her, and she sailed for the island of O'Brassil.

Not many days elapsed, ere from the distant horizon a vessel was seen approaching the harbour. It anchored, and bore the distressing intelligence that a horde of Northern pirates were daily expected to land at the island of O'Brassil, while the messenger delivered a most earnest request that both the